



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
William A. Hinton State Laboratory Institute  
305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

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JOHN AUERBACH  
COMMISSIONER

Daniel F. Conley  
District Attorney  
Suffolk County  
One Bulfinch Place  
Boston, MA 02114  
December 11, 2009

Dear Mr. Conley,

The Forensic Drug Laboratories at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health analyze illicit drug evidence submitted by law enforcement in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 111, Section 12. Steady increases in the number of submissions, coupled with decreasing resources have resulted in a considerable sample backlog and long analysis turn around times. As such, the laboratory has received an increasing number of requests for expedited analysis. We appreciate the need for more rapid turnaround in some cases, however it is critical that these requests be prioritized as each of these requests further exacerbates the backlog by moving samples up in the testing queue.

The current sample submissions exceed the laboratories' capacity for timely analysis. In order to assure that cases determined to be a high priority by your office are analyzed quickly, we are implementing the following :

- **Please designate a point of contact (and one back-up) in your office with the authority to triage and designate cases for expedited testing.** Please provide the contact information to Elisabeth O'Brien [elisabeth.obrien@state.ma.us](mailto:elisabeth.obrien@state.ma.us) and me at [julianne.nassif@state.ma.us](mailto:julianne.nassif@state.ma.us) as soon as possible. Effective January 5, 2009, we will honor requests from designated contact people only. We will no longer accept requests from police departments or unauthorized assistant district attorneys for expedited testing.

A review of our state wide data shows that selected prosecutors request a disproportionate number expedited tests relative to others within their jurisdiction. These requests may be entirely justified based on the types of cases assigned to these individuals, but the laboratory is not qualified to make that determination. It is important that your office triage these requests, so that the highest priority cases are tested in a timely manner. Requests for expedited testing may be made by email [druglaboratory@state.ma.us](mailto:druglaboratory@state.ma.us) or by FAX 617.983.6625.

- **Please notify the laboratory as to the disposition of cases so that laboratory resources are not allocated to unnecessary testing of samples.** This is particularly important with respect to pending marijuana cases. Notification may be made via the Drug Laboratory e-mailbox or by FAX.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. Please feel free to contact me at 617.983.6651 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Julianne Nassif  
Laboratory Director  
Division of Analytical Chemistry